

LADEN WITH FRAGRANCE as spring winds are these hot cross buns made from a spicy sweet yeast dough and filled with the traditional currants. Other popular fruits are citron, raisins, and chopped candied fruit or peel. This sweet yeast dough is successful as a refrigerator dough and may be made a day or two before it is to be used, thus saving last minute flurries of preparation.

Hot Cross Buns

2 packages yeast, compressed or dry granular	2 eggs, beaten
¼ cup lukewarm water	1 cup currants
1 cup milk	1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup shortening	¼ teaspoon allspice
½ cup sugar	5 cups sifted enriched flour (about)
1 teaspoon salt	Confectioner's sugar icing

Soften yeast in lukewarm water. Scald milk. Add shortening, sugar, and salt. Cool to lukewarm. Add flour to make a thick batter. Add softened yeast and eggs. Beat well. Add currants, spices, and enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn out on lightly floured board and knead until satiny. Place in greased bowl, cover and let rise until doubled. Punch down. Cover and let rise 10 minutes. Shape into small buns and place on greased baking sheet or in greased pan. Let rise until doubled. With knife or scissors, cut a small cross in the top of each bun. Bake in moderate oven (375 degrees) 20 to 25 minutes. While hot, ice with confectioners sugar icing, following the cross in the buns. This makes three dozen buns.

Hot Cross Buns

2 packages yeast, compressed or dry granular
1/4 cup lukewarm water
1 cup milk
1/4 cup shortening
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup currants
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon allspice
5 cups sifted enriched flour (about)
Confectioner's sugar icing

Soften yeast in lukewarm water. Scald milk. Add shortening, sugar, and salt. Cool to lukewarm. Add flour to make a thick batter. Add softened yeast and eggs. Beat well. Add currants, spices, and enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn out on lightly floured board and knead until satiny. Place in greased bowl, cover and let rise until doubled. Punch down. Cover and let rise 10 minutes. Shape into small buns and place on greased baking sheet or in greased pan. Let rise until doubled. With knife or scissors, cut a small cross in the top of each bun. Bake in moderate oven (375 degrees) 20 to 25 minutes. While hot, ice with confectioners sugar icing, following the cross in the buns. This makes three dozen buns.

HOT CROSS BUNS

1/2 Cup Water

1/2 Cup Whole Milk

1/2 Cup Sugar

2 1/4 oz. Pkgs Yeast

1/3 Cup Unsalted Butter

more if needed

1 Large Egg Yolk

1 1/2 tsp. Vanilla

3 Cups All Purpose Flour

3/4 tsp Salt

1/2 tsp Nutmeg - or a little more to your taste

1/2 tsp Cinnamon - or a little more to your taste

1/2 Cup Currants - plumped in

microwave and cooled (raisins, golden raisins)

1 Egg - beaten for brushing

ICING GLAZE

2 Cups Confectioners' Sugar - sifted

2 Tbs Whole Milk

1 1/2 tsp. Vanilla - or more to your taste

DIRECTIONS

Combine the water and milk in a saucepan and warm over low heat until it reaches 100° but no more than 110°. Remove from the heat and sprinkle the yeast and a pinch of sugar and flour over the surface of the liquid. Set aside without stirring until the mixture becomes foamy and rising up the sides of the pan. This will be about 10-12 minutes.

Whisk the butter, egg yolk and vanilla into the yeast mixture.

Whisk the flour, remaining sugar, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon in a large bowl.

Make a well in the center of the flour and stir in the yeast mixture with a wooden spoon to make a thick, slightly sticky dough. Stir in the currants. Turn the dough onto a lightly

floured work surface and knead until it becomes soft and elastic – about 8 minutes.

Then shape into a ball.

Brush the inside of a bowl with butter. Put the dough ball into the bowl and turn it around so that it all gets covered slightly with the butter. Cover with plastic wrap and let it rise free from drafts in a warm place until it doubles in size – about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

FORMING THE BUNS

Preheat oven to 375°.

Butter a 9 X 14" baking pan. Turn the dough out of the bowl onto a lightly floured surface and pat into a 16 X 8" rectangle. Divide it into 12 equal balls each about 2 oz. Make round balls by tucking any rough edges under and place the balls seam side down

on the prepared pan. Leave space between each ball so that they are not touching.

Cover the pan with buttered plastic wrap and set in a warm place until the balls have more than doubled in size - about 45 minutes.

Carefully remove the plastic wrap and brush the tops of the balls with the beaten egg.

Bake until golden brown and puffy, and a thermometer inserted in center reads 190° - about 25 minutes.

FOR THE GLAZE

Stir together the confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla until smooth.

Transfer the icing to a pastry bag or a plastic bag with a small slit in one corner.

Ice the buns in a very thick cross shape over the top of the warm buns.